No.5 Produced by Dalston Mens Group May 1977

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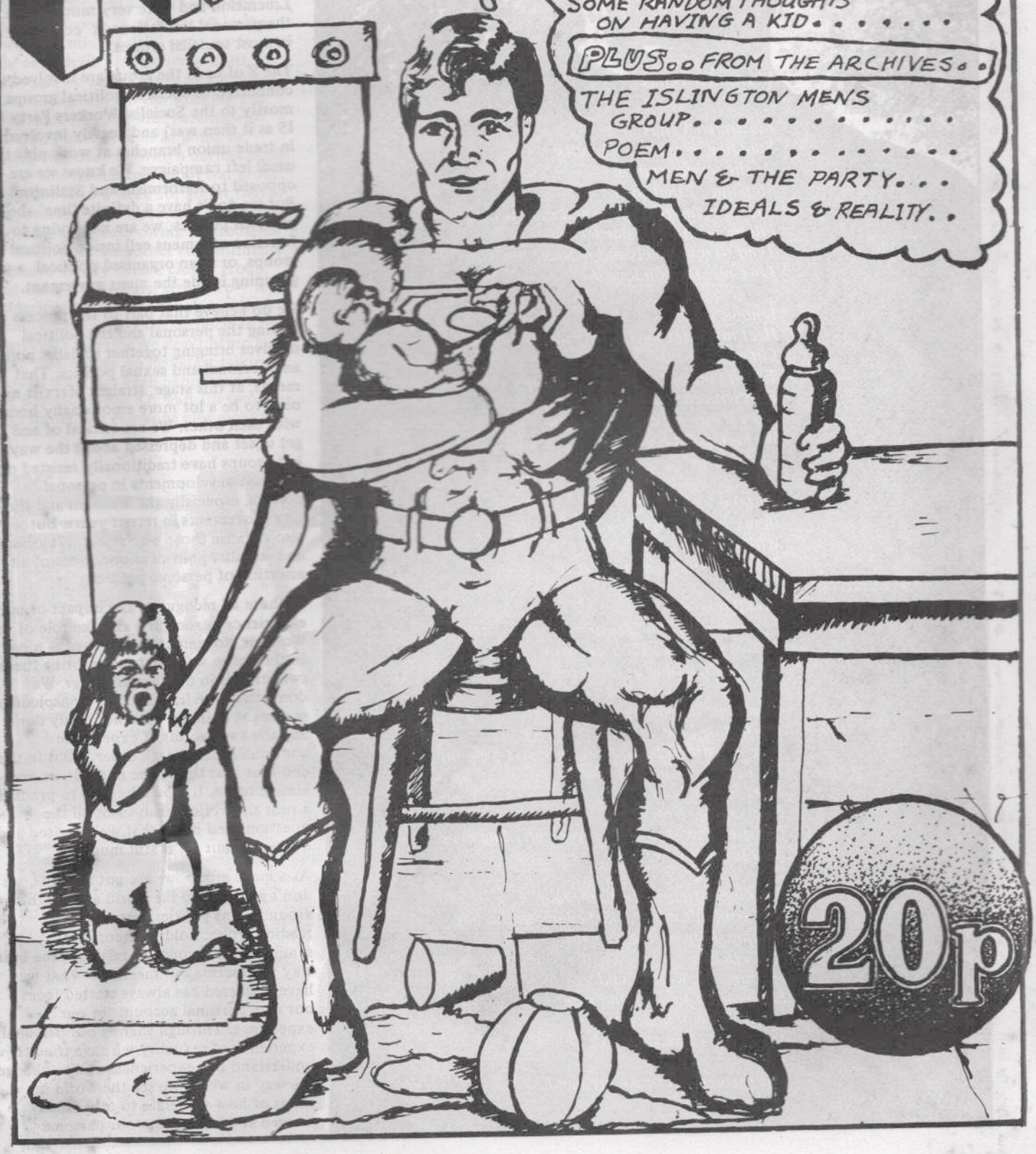

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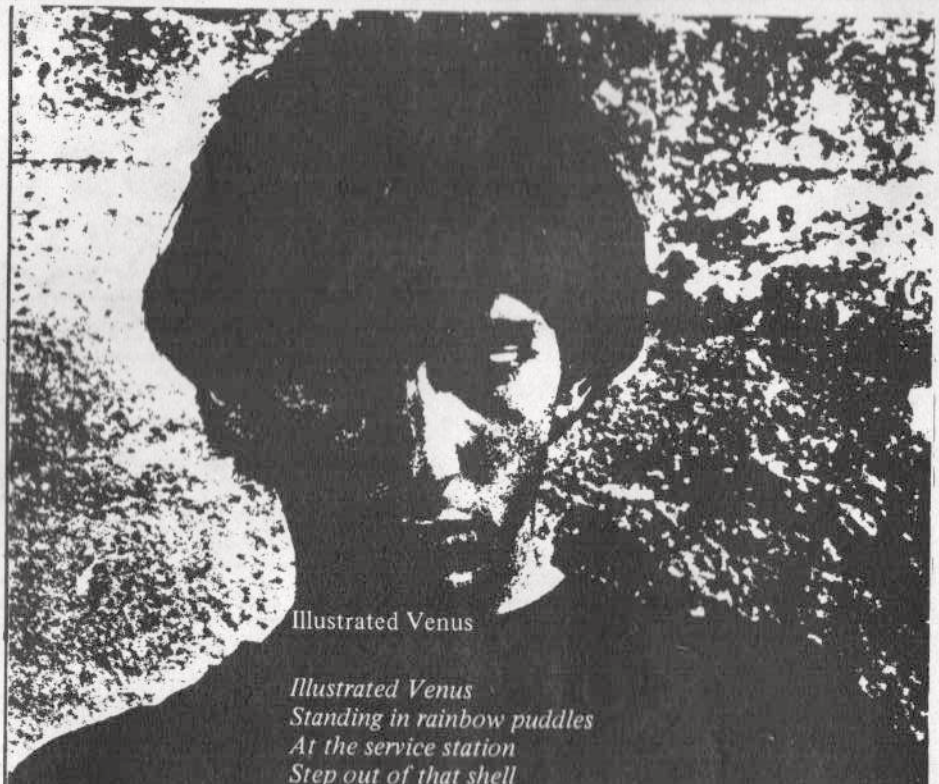


Illustrated Venus

Illustrated Venus
Standing in rainbow puddles
At the service station
Step out of that shell
Put on your greasy coat and rub me down
Fill me with three star feeling
Tend to my wheels and massage me with oil
Love me. Do you love me?

Lounge on me
Heat my sheet steel with your abdomen
Cling to me
Touch your soft cheeks against my chromium wings
Flirt with the passers by
They'll buy me and I love you
We look good together
Go with me

I'll take you
In my hands. I'll ride you
With high speed. I'll make you
Hum and tingle in our clutch

You'll take me
In your arms. You'll bear me
So we come. But I'll brake you
And you'll wither at my touch

Touch me up darling
I'm feeling blue
Give my still hulk some warmth and wipe my eyes
I'm needing you
Start for me honey
Stop crying. Now.
Get me to work and wipe your bleeding eyes
You fucking cow

Choking. I stepped out into rain
She wouldn't move. I kicked her in the side.
Sulking. I lay on the cold tar
And cried.
Helping, the woman said
She's out of fuel. Stupid man.
When will you understand?
Loving. It's love she needs.

But she wouldn't take my hand.

Dalston Mens Group: A History

Our group really started in January 1976 out of a nucleus of 5 men, who had been meeting together for 3 months. We had only hazy ideas of why we wanted to be in a group. Some of us had heard or read about other mens groups or been to the early mens conference in London. We wanted to try and create the sense of community and understanding that many women seemed to have in the Womens Movement, and which we as men seemed to be lacking lost in a world of ritual personal isolation. We had all been influenced by women in Womens Liberation and were very much aware of the personal limitations of 'comradeship' in most socialist groups.

The 8 of us in the group are involved or connected to socialist political groups, mostly to the Socialist Workers Party (or IS as it then was) and heavily involved in trade union branches at work plus the usual left campaigns. We know we are opposed to Reformism and Stalinism. But we don't have a definite 'line' about personal politics, we are not trying to function as a mens cell inside political groups, or as an organised political grouping inside the mens movement.

We do believe that part of the process of linking the personal and the political involves bringing together socialist politcs and personal and sexual politics. That means, at this stage, straight Marxist men need to be a lot more emotionally honest with each other. We are critical of and get upset and depressed about the way left groups have tradjtionally resisted or opposed developments in personal politics, especially the Womens and the Gay Movements in recent years. But we also criticise those who reject left groups and socialist politics as one focus of an assertion of personal politics.

We have all recognised the impact of our experience as socialists and the role of the Womens Movement on our lives as men. In the group we have tried to bring these two strands in our lives together. We don't claim we have had any conspicuous success at doing it – it's not easily done and the two worlds of experience continually resist each other – but in the end that is at the centre of what we are aiming to do. It would be nice to produce a neat theoretical analysis of all the questions and issues that we've raised and discussed, but we're still muddled.

As a mens group, we are not activists, we don't go out into the world and do things around mens politics, nor are we a reading group, holding theoretical seminars. Consciousness-raising is the best way to describe our meetings. What we have discussed has always started from our own personal accounts of our experience. Through sharing our personal experience of sexuality we have tried to understand our experiences and to change the way in which we see the world in terms of how we relate to other men, women and kids. From our personal

experience of lives and relationships, loves, problems, fears and hopes we've set out to connect what we have in common with the rest of our politics. This has been very erratic – mainly, sometimes with great intensity, we have discovered each other in new ways and gained a lot of strength and support from being together and sharing our personal feelings with other men. This comes as a great relief after many years of 'relating' in traditional blokish ways.

Four of us have kids, one very recently. Three of us have been married at one time, but all have split up from their wives, one recently while in the group. We are all straight with a spattering of gay experiences. And we're all in the 'educated middle class' now, professionally employed . . . or unemployed, although we came from a much wider class background in the working and lower middle class with parents who wouldn't have dreamt of going to college themselves. Which defines some important limitations about our group. We meet once a week for about two or three hours, with lapses and sometimes month-long breaks owing to problems of time, work and other commitments. We have mainly been a closed group, and there is no formal structure – it's a leaderless group and though meetings usually have a main theme decided on at a previous meeting we don't often keep to it. Sometimes we just start talking around what has been happening to us the previous week. Or wait till someone says something everyone else picks up on.

Most of us have known each other for some years – some of the relationships in the group go back over a decade! Surprisingly, this didn't cause difficulties – in fact being in the group helped open up relationships which had got stuck in old grooves – and being friends outside the group has helped us stay together as a group through times when we felt very unclear about our aims. When we can't think of anything to talk about, or we are all tired or fed up, we can always just have a drink together. But the meeting provides the institutional framework in which we talk about mens politics and try to develop our political understanding of men and the male role. At times it is a very frustrating and stagnating process – but by and large we go on feeling that we benefit from meeting and that it has changed us in the way we function with other women *and* men outside the group in the rest of our lives. Though often it is difficult to put your finger on some of these changes or to find words to describe them. At first we talked about our selves – personal histories of what our childhoods were like, parents, schools, learning about fucking, our current sexual states and the way we were living. This helped us get to know each other and put everyone in the same position – those who were new to the group as well as old mates. We went on to discuss a lot of topics that we variously thought were important – adolescence, fucking, nuclear and multiple relationships, having children, work, jealousy, the womens movements, sexuality and sex objects, male friendships, loneliness, collective living, drinking, pornography, fascism. It is impossible to summarise what we discussed and learnt in all this. Usually we just learnt about each others ideas and experience. We hardly ever felt we got to the stage of working an issue right out so that we all ended up sharing a particular analysis or conclusion about something. Two themes did keep cropping up repeatedly – one was the importance of kids when you start thinking about almost any of these matters, how having them affects you totally and comes to influence your relationships and what you can give and take from them. Secondly, we talked a lot about monogamy and multiple relationships and their different problems in the context of seeking some sort of change from the limitations of nuclear set-ups, their closedupness and resistance to change. Multiple relationships in which most of us have been involved sometimes for several years and sometimes with women who are also with other men in the group have their own problems, to say the least.

These discussions have not got us to a position of formulating any grand theories – in fact we've often felt bogged down and confused about where we are supposed to be going. We constantly discuss the nature of the group, whether it ought to exist and where we are at, usually in terms of whether the group should set out to be supportive or ideological or interventionist. We've tried to be supportive within the limits of our own personal psychologies and our experience, and we'd like to develop a clearer ideological grasp of ourselves.

Mainly, we've been led on to asking more questions about what we aim to get out of the experience. How do we get away from the pragmatism of our approach to issues in order to develop a socialist critique of men, masculinity, chauvinism and sexual oppression? How do we do this without losing a lot of what goes on in the group that is new and exploratory? What should be the relationship of men to feminism and the Womens Movement? How do we avoid colluding in our own forms of mystification? How do we get to be more critical of each other? How can mens issues be raised on a more general political basis – in trade unions and political groups? Unless we can begin to generate specific demands around the experience of being men in a sexist and capitalist society, for instance, demanding rights in our conditions of work that recognize men have relationships with their children, mens groups risk remaining small, inward-looking and irrelevant to the outside world.

The Sexual Bookworm's Corner

Pluto Press are offering a free copy of Edward Carpenter's classic 'Love's Coming of Age' free with any order of their new two sexual politics titles: Sheila Rowbotham and Jeff Weeks's *Socialism and the New Life; the Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis'* and Sheila Rowbotham's study of the woman who first campaigned for abortion on demand *'A New World For Women; Stella Browne, Socialist Feminist'*. All three for £3.30 if you send the money to Pluto[Unit 10, Spencer Court, 7 Chalcot Rd., NW1.

Also coming from Pluto: Bob Dixon's *Catching Them Young'* a study of the sexual and political ideas in children's fiction.

Available now: Paul Morrison's poems on *Pregnant Fatherhood*. 25p a copy from the Mens Free Press, 19 Redmans Rd., E1.

Ideals

Ideals

The function of a revolutionary socialist organisation:

Around the base of a strong and informed working class membership, organised at the point of production, active in the trade union struggle, the organisation spreads out into the community, organised in tenants groups, black organisations, women's organisations, cultural groups. The central nervous system is the struggle against the employing class, members in, and sensitivity to, all aspects of struggle, economic, geographical, ideological, political, cultural are fed back into each branch and district of the organisation. Specialist groups feed particular skills into the organisation as a whole. An open democratic internal structure allows free debate, a central committee directs the organisation's day to day activity. This is under the control of an elected committee (which elects the CC). Both are subject to recall, the NC is elected at a bi-annual conference allowing the maximum possible representation in terms of members, factions, specialist groups.

Members discuss all aspects of the struggle. They learn to rely on each other, discussions flow with astonishing ease from the details of a strike to the problems of child-rearing, the realities of creche rotas to the problems of countering bougeois ideology. Members assume positions of responsibility within the organisation on the basis of mutual respect, not hierarchy imposed charisma. All members are cadres, *all* are responsible, leadership changes are accompanied by open discussion, not privately organised boot jobs.

Growing day by day the group expands to the Revolutionary Party, capitalism is challenged, found wanting and defeated, we advance, in a mood of solidarity and self congratulation to the millenium. The lion and lamb go out drinking together . .

Reality

The function of a revolutionary socialist organisation:

Around the base of a weak and ill-informed petit bourgeois post student membership, organised in technical colleges and white collar jobs, the organisation makes more or less successful forays into the working class. Occasional proletarian hostages are taken and thrust forward through the organisation. Despairing of mass recruitment the members develop petit-bourgeois ideas of proletarian life styles rooted in philistinism, pearly king accents and routinist activities. Disturbed by the impasse the leadership plays the role of leading faction (conspiracy) within the organisation and anaesthetise the central nervous system of the organisation. By organising according to their pre-conceptions they get the answers they want from the membership. The members alter themselves or are altered to suit the leaders. Specialist groups serve the leadership or are disbanded as disruptive to the central tasks of building a working class leadership. Fads play a large role, as the immediate situation demands, and are discarded as the immediate situation demands. Long term analysis is stifled, realism is dismissed as cynicism or defeatism. Conferences take place sporadically, represent the dominant tendencies of the leadership's thought, or lack of it. Opposition is ill-represented, and its ideas, due to lack of communication, disorganisation and defeatism are easily set aside by the leadership. Opportunists coast to power in the regions on the coat-tails of the national leadership. With little internal education or democracy workers leave, members leave, the turn-over accelerates.

Members distrust each other, and rely on alcohol to provide a facsimile of honesty and openness.

People come and go talking of Trotsky.

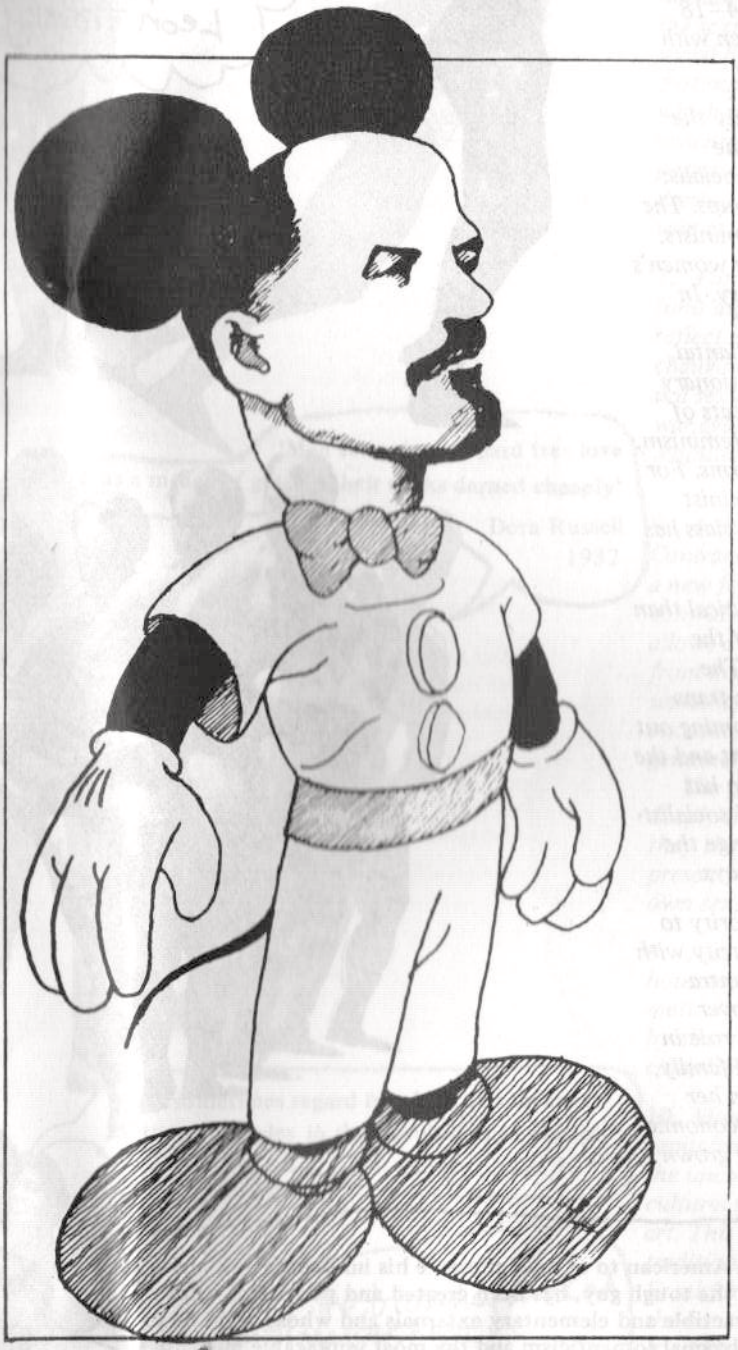
Ideals

The function of a mens group:

With the sophistication of contemporary capitalism the realisation that organ isation or workers at the point of production has become less important leads to the formation of groups, inspired by the example of our sisters, to deal honestly and openly with the problems of our 8000 years of dominance over one half of humanity. We talk of our problems, our insecurities, realise that we are not alone, become more understanding, more sympathetic. Develop through our brotherhood a new conception of the womens movement.

We go out into the community. We establish groups across the land. Develop links with our foreign brothers. Mens centres spring up, proletarians come in, in ones and twos at first then in larger numbers to discuss why they beat their wives, masturbate, can't get a hard on,

& Reality



buy pornography, hate their jobs, want to become gays, through their new understanding they challenge the meaninglessness of the roles assigned to them by an impersonal capitalism. In their millions they spontaneously rise up, the bosses are buried under a deluge of flowers . . .

Reality

The function of a mens group:

Worried by the emptiness of much political activity, and disturbed that women may be on to something good, men gather together, embarrassed at first, in small groups to discuss the shambles their lives have become. We talk of our problems and insecurities, gain solace from our shared fears. Become a little easier within ourselves as we realise we are not alone. Then we do it again, and again, and again. Members begin to go away for the weekend, find new women friends. Contemplate using our new found vocabulary as a more sophisticated weapon of male domination.

Some, more libertarian inclined, go into the community and establish mens centres. The local long hairs frequent them, thus repelling to outwardly respectable members of the working class community. Youthful proletarians assert their peer-group status by tossing bricks through the Centre's windows, indulging in sexual wall arts and assaulting Centre members who challenge their more traditional concepts of sexuality.

Members drift away. A small group remains and alternates between warring and over-open relationships. Eventually a MC Stalin emerges and everybody else goes to wherever libertarians decide the battle front is that year . . .

The Deal

'With the Party we are everything,
'Without the Party we are nothing'
Trotsky

We do not have the party. We have a diseased seed of it. We live with it, with a sense of nagging irritation, or we live without it with a sense of nagging guilt and lose our raison d'etre.

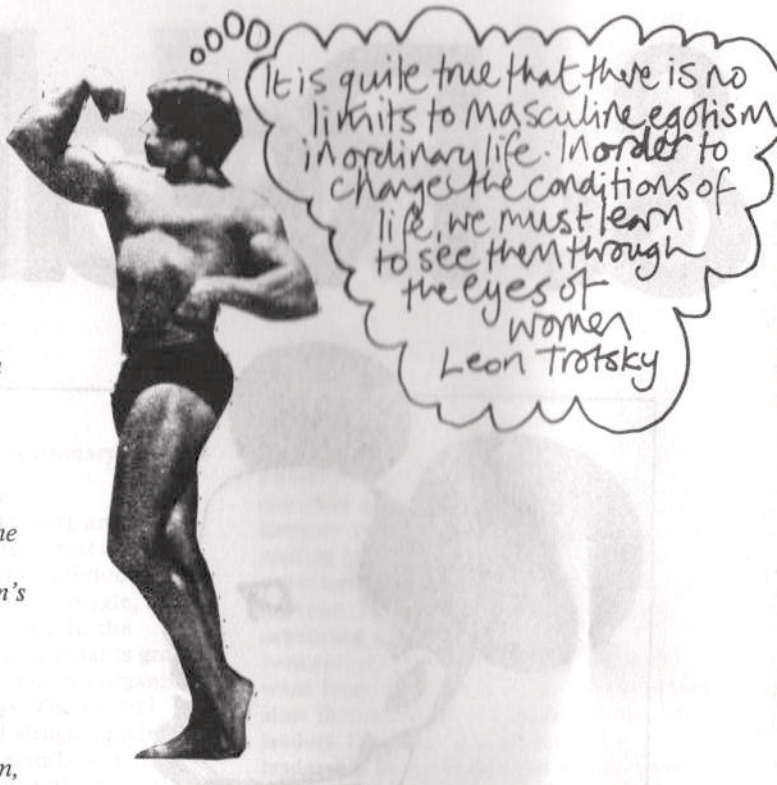
As I write a tune of my adolescence, 'Diamonds' plays on the radio. I remember the parties I went to, the girls I lusted for, the impossibility of matching the charisma of Jet Harris, the unattainability of the women, who now 15 years on tell me that I exploited them, when I couldn't get near them.

Now at 32 they return to haunt me. I can get off with women now, but I wonder why I should. I rely on them and men to define me, I shy away from myself, I can't look too close for too long at my personality. I don't like it.

So I hang on to the end of the revolutionary group. Close enough to keep warm, not close enough to affect it, to change it, to make it better. I tired of trying, and it threatens to colonise me, to take over the void in the middle.

By habit I return to the men's group. Since its expansion from five to 11, its membership has fluctuated between three and five. At best it is a sexual/political garage, which doesn't transform, but keeps the engine turning over, oils the overheated parts, provides pleasant non-alcoholic cameraderie, gives me some elements of trust, surprise, insight. A dressing station some miles from the front, in a secluded, if stark glade. . .

SIXTEEN THOUGHTS . . . . . .


It is quite true that there is no limits to masculine egotism in ordinary life. In order to change the conditions of life, we must learn to see them through the eyes of women
Leon Trotsky

1. *Questioning of the relative position of men and women has always come at times of change of gear in capitalist production. In the late 19th century, during and after the First War and since the late Sixties, this questioning was associated with battles over censorship, homosexuality and women's legal status and new phases in the availability of contraception, first publicly discussed in the Bradlaugh-Besant trial, popularised within marriage during the 14–18 War and widely available to single working-class women with the Pill.*

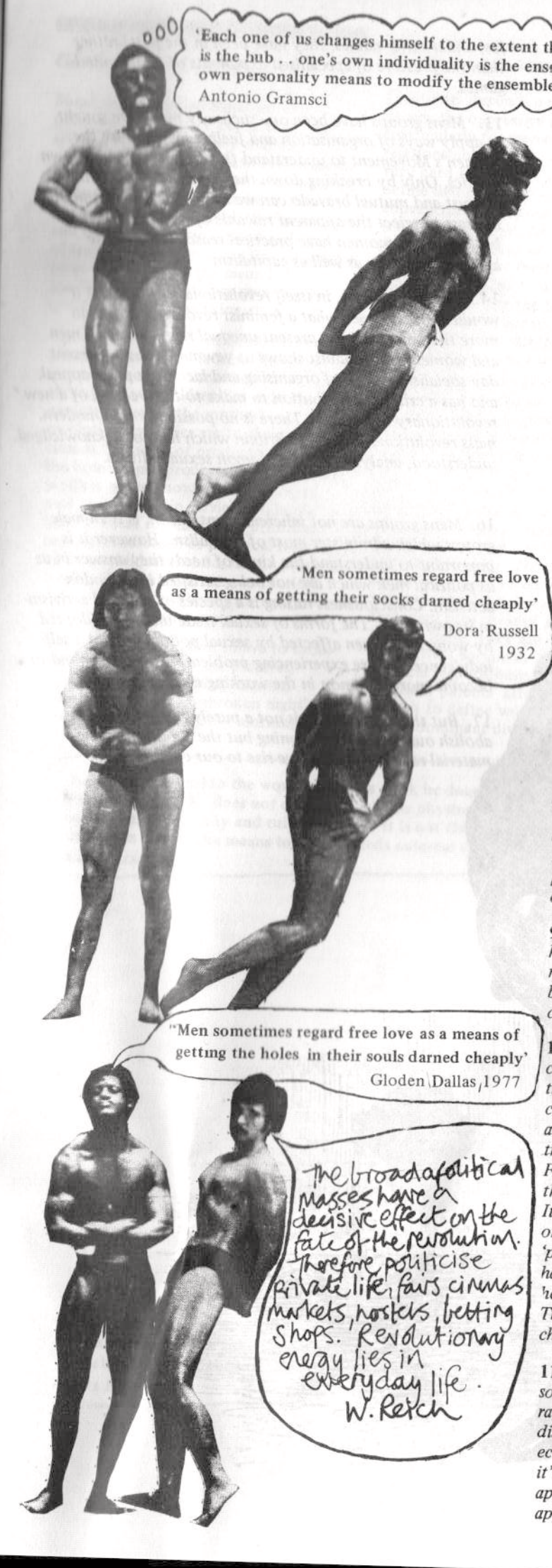
2. *Modern women historians have established not only the involvement and impact on working class women of the feminist movements but evidence of the mingling of socialist and feminist ideas in the rank and file of left wing groups. The kind of personal and political connections socialist-feminists, gay revolutionaries and male socialists affected by the women's movement, strive to make today have their own history. In fact, despite the tidal wave of publishing, we have not advanced very far beyond the work of Carpenter, Kollantai, Dora Russell, Stella Browne and Reich. Just as revolutionary socialism lay in defeat for three decades after the defeats of the Twenties and the catastrophes of the Thirties, so feminism, where it survived, took liberal or social-democratic forms. For while there certainly is no automatic guarantee of feminist advance with socialist victory, defeat for the working class has always meant the forcing back of women's cause.*

3. *The modern women's movement is much more radical than the Suffrage Movement which is in turn to the Left of the Women's Rights movement of the late 19th century. The women's movement of the early Seventies wanted the transformation of capitalist society, not rights within it, coming out of and extending the critique of the student movement and the revolutionary left. And even where women's liberation has tended to separate into liberal feminist, separatist and socialist-feminists, at least the third strand continues to challenge the way modern capitalism is organised in fundamental ways.*

4. *It is able to successfully challenge masculine authority to dispose of female labour power and reproductive capacity with the aid of two post-war changes in capitalism. Mass contraception, notably the Pill, has allowed female control over fertility. And most women now envisage a permanent role in the labour market, only briefly interrupted by a small family, rather than a life at home, economically dependent on her husband's earnings. Women's earnings and therefore economic independence in relation to men's wages have steadily grown for two decades.*

'In the truly awesome attempt of the American to at once preserve his innocence and arrive at man's estate, that mindless monster, the tough guy, has been created and perfected, whose masculinity is found in the most intractible and elementary externals and whose attitude to women is the wedding of the most abysmal romanticism and the most implacable mistrust'
James Baldwin 1956

5. *Since 1945 the average size of families of all classes has fallen. The work performed within the home has also 'shrunk' due to the extended role of state-run social and educational services and the penetration of commodity production and industrialised domestic methods. This pattern is being altered by the social service cuts which seek to return the full responsibility for family welfare to the mother and the pressure of unemployment. But the general tendency is probably irreversible. Domestic work and childcare remain a female* **responsibility**, *even if both man and wife work and the husband 'helps out'. But the quantity of that work has decreased . . . just ask your mother and grandmother.*


'Each one of us changes himself to the extent that he changes the complex relations of which he is the hub . . one's own individuality is the ensemble of these relationships . . to modify one's own personality means to modify the ensemble of these relations'
Antonio Gramsci
'Men sometimes regard free love as a means of getting their socks darned cheaply'
Dora Russell
1932
"Men sometimes regard free love as a means of getting the holes in their souls darned cheaply'
Gloden Dallas, 1977
the broad political masses have a decisive effect on the fate of the revolution. therefore politicise private life, fairs cinmas markets, hostels, betting shops. Revolutionary energy lies in everyday life.
W. Reich

6. *At the same time the material basis of male authority has shrunk. The husband is no longer the sole or even the main earner. The personal authority he is able to exert in the world of skill-less work is itself dwindling and his ability to sell his own labour and the price he gets for it, especially for the older manual worker, is no longer automatically greater than the woman's. The general tendency of modern capitalism to lessen the sexual division of labour undermines the sexual roles in social life which in turn leads to a cultural rear-guard action of grotesquely over-played ideas of masculinity and femininity which no longer have economic reality. Alf Garnett is a comic anachronism, which is why his attempts to assert a vanished patriarchal control are especially plaintive. So are the men dressed in Mexican brigand or 1st War Aviator outfits in a vain attempt to recover a vanished male panache.*

7. *Punk rock, kill 'em beat 'em, black and blue, anti-woman films and the horror movies obsession with child witches reflect not a renewal but a death agony of that kind of chauvinism. In the very grotesqueness of its ham-masculinity is a sexual rearguard, a sense of having lost what they see as a war against women but which is in fact a self-inflicted amputation and distortion of themselves.*

8. *A new sexual era, whether men like it or not, has arrived. Contraception allows non-reproductive sexuality and pioneers a new female erotic assertiveness and desire for physical control. Women's more permanent relation to work too allows a much greater emotional and sexual independence from men. There is now no logical taboo against homo-sexuality; nowadays no-one is irredeemably hetro and gay sexuality seems in some ways to offer greater possibility of genuinely sexually equal relationships.*

The gay movement has tossed its spanner particularily deeply in the sexual works; no hetro is quite so sure if what they thought was their sexuality is oppressive, what image to present, how to cope with physical affection towards their own sex, where sex stops and sexism starts.

9. *Just as productive labour is less and less a male sphere so housework, cooking and childcare are ceasing to be an automatically female responsibility. Men are now facing first hand, by sharing child care and domestic labour, the force of female complaint.*

10. *Women's liberation and feminist revolt against modern capitalism stresses the system's technical capacity to invade the unconscious and appropriate experience, taking up a cultural struggle against the images of TV advertising and art. This connects to a submerged (and very male-dominated) tradition of revolutionary thought from the Surrealists, the Frankfurt School, Lefebre and the Situationists' onslaught on the banality and alienation of everyday life under capitalism. It emphasises the importance for revolutionary politics of organised self-expression and collective understanding of 'personal' experience, at a time when socialist organisations have stressed political organisation and the struggle for hegemony at the place of work and even, or especially Trotskyist groups are saturated with the guilt and self-denial characteristic of Stalinism's psychology.*

11. *As men we have responded with envy and admiration to some aspects of the women's movement 'Consciousness raising' 'Sisterhood' as something lacking in the existing left's dislike of the subjectivity and tendency to reduce politics to economics. If elements of the women's movement are utopian it's important, as Marx did, not to deny that utopian thought's appeal, but to sharpen its vision and tease out how they might apply to us as men and in class politics.*

12. *But while we see revolutionary value in self-change, self-criticism and learning with others how to be in the world more authentically, we are wary . . and weary, of psychic ultra-leftism. Men need ways (apart from struggle with women lovers . . which gets destructive) to overcome their emotional sloth, need to find out what many women know already. But because we take therapy and consciousness-raising seriously (especially in what it can show us how the organised Left is blocked) we are dubious of the idea that, by an effort of understanding or a bout of therapy, we will uproot or abolish our conditioning. This only works if you are careful to ensure no subsequent contact with the real world. And that means declining to work . . which may ease your alienation but nobody else's. We find the emotional hypochondria, psychic terrorism and habitual melodrama in some regions of the feminist and libertarian Left somewhat daunting and pretty unproductive. We would like to see consciousness raising, therapy, just being able to talk openly and politically about life as a natural part of how socialists of both sexes organise (as, under other names, they have been in the past) rather than the preserve of specialised exponents of sexual mind-games.*

13. *Mens groups have been one such way men have sought to apply ways of organisation and feeling invented by the Women's Movement to understand the limitations of our own politics. Only by breaking down the barriers of competition, distrust and mutual bravado can we really see how it is in our interest to reject the apparent rewards of male power, that both men and women have practical reasons to struggle against patriarchy as well as capitalism.*

14. *Feminism is not, in itself revolutionary, or at least it would be hard to see what a feminist revolution could do more than reversing the present unequal relationship of men and women. But feminist shows us yawning holes in present day socialism's ways of organising and lack of popular appeal. and has a critical contribution to make to the creation of a new revolutionary movement. There is no possibility of a modern, mass revolutionary party in Britain which has not acknowledged, understood, analysed and acted upon sexual politics.*

16. *Mens groups are not inherently anti-sexist, is is all-male groups which administer most of capitalism. However it is important to understand the kinds of needs they answer in us as political men which are not being satisfied in orthodox activism. Consciousness raising is a species of political activism in its own right. The forms of sexual trade-unionism adopted by women and men affected by sexual politics are* **not** *a self-indulgence. We are experiencing problems which are bound to become more common in the working class in general.*

17. *But the point finally is not a purely mental effort to abolish our sexual conditioning but the abolition of the material relations which give rise to our condition.*

Getting Some Childhood Back

Some say: the transformation of personal life can only occur after 'the revolution'. That's to say that the objective constraints of capitalism are so huge – particularly for the working class – that the oppressive nature of the nuclear family – particularly for women and children – doesn't stand a chance of transformation to some less oppressive form of living until the means of production in society are owned and controlled by the working class.

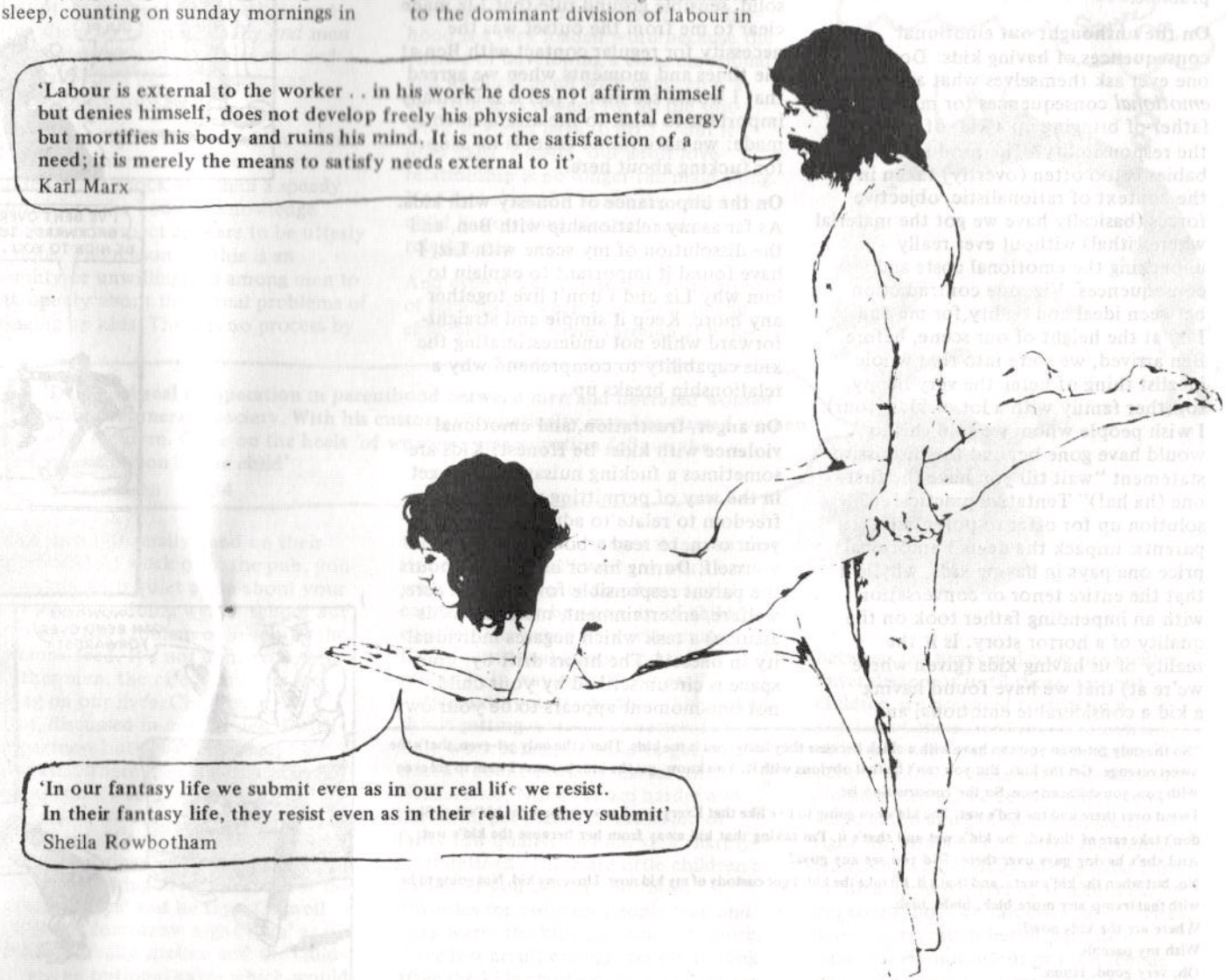
For many men without children; and for many biological fathers; this position quite easily rationalises itself to: "The choice to have children lies with the parents (or even: the mother); my revolutionary duties are to the working class at the point of production (out of the home, since production in the home is either not acknowledged or simply paid theoretical lip service to); in the light of these revolutionary priorities I have no theoretical or practical responsibility to childcare, children and parents; it will all happen after the revolution comrades!; I won't be drawn into your petty bourgeois diversions; onwards!"

So to all those who don't have to think twice before going to the pictures, going to meetings, taking relaxing holidays, getting an unbroken night's sleep, counting on sunday mornings in bed, regularly having a few pints with the lads, here are a few thoughts.

Capitalism depends on, among other things, the oppressive and exploitative (particularly for women and children) relationships of the nuclear family. It is very hard for biological parents to define living alternatives to the prevailing conventions of the nuclear family. On the whole, men go out to work and depend on the reproduction of their labour power and their emotional capacity to realise it by women (even if she works outside the home as well); and they expect her to take the main responsibility for children. Breaking from this pattern does not simply require the will and commitment of the parents. (Although that will and commitment is not easily found in most men). It requires a vast increase in state childcare facilities; a shortening of the working week; a social recognition of the equality of women in society. And much more, all of which can only be in some form of socialist society. Does this mean, then, that socialists without children have no responsibility to childcare in the here and now? No. Children are a living fact irrespective of the thousand variables that went into parents' individual choices to have them. They are, hopefully, tomorrow's socialists. You have a political responsibility towards children and their parents' attempts in the present to define working alternatives to the dominant division of labour in the nuclear family. And this means more than that 'Fight the Cuts Campaign' or this 'Nursery Campaign'. Not just shit on your hands, but maybe an enrichening of your idea of what socialism could be by living just a little bit of it now. Childhood's a long way away when you're in your late twenties. Get some of it back.

It is also very hard for two biological parents to decide to live separately and maintain a joint responsibility and life with their child/children. It doesn't often happen. Yet, what's being sought is non-oppressive alternatives to complete separation or intolerable life within the nuclear family. Socialists have a responsibility to parents who are trying these alternatives. It is not simply a question of living a bit of your socialism now, but of bringing socialism to the area of 'personal life' in a way that enriches our concept of what socialism is and could be. Consequently our 'strategy' for achieving socialism might get altered and enriched on the way.

This is not being posed as an alternative to the more conventional fields of socialist activity, but as a means of humanising (excuse the word) some of those who are trying to bring it about and allowing some of the more human among us to help bring it about.


'Labour is external to the worker . . in his work he does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. It is not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely the means to satisfy needs external to it'
Karl Marx
'In our fantasy life we submit even as in our real life we resist.
In their fantasy life, they resist even as in their real life they submit'
Sheila Rowbotham

Some Random Thoughts on Having a Kid

(Ben to me and to you all)

On the phantasy of having kids: I can quite clearly remember when I was much younger – in my late teens and early twenties – how well I could get on with kids aged between 6 and 10. That is I found it easy to relate to them, especially thro' play. And play always consisted of taking up the fantastic – games of imagination with a lot of physical activity thrown into them. It's of no consequence what the games were: the point is that thro' them I found it easy to achieve the same level as kids much younger than me – and I enjoyed it. Significantly, it was thro' those kinds of relationships that I developed a fantasy for having kids of my own. The components of the fantasy: that any relationship with my kid(s) would be very democratic; that my kid would develop through me, and me through him; that any expression of the formal relationship father–son would dissolve into human being–human being; that there would be mutual respect for each other based on some kind of notion of equality, and so on and so forth. Many of these illusions were shattered in practice.

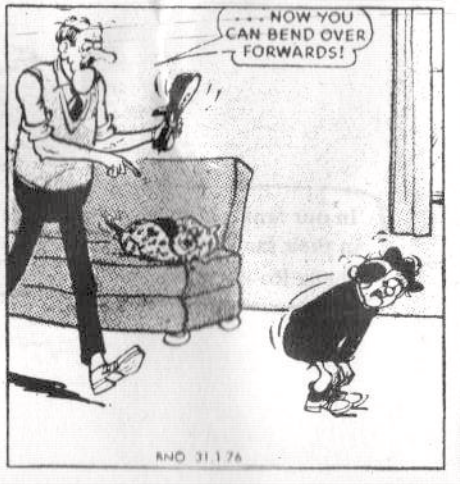
On the unthought out emotional consequences of having kids: Does anyone ever ask themselves what are the *emotional* consequences for mother and father of bringing up a kid, of taking on the responsibility? The production of babies is too often (overtly) taken in the context of rationalistic, objective forces (basically have we got the material wherewithal) without ever really unpacking the emotional costs and consequences. Viz, one contradiction between ideal and reality for me and Liz: at the height of our scene, before Ben arrived, we were into that whole idealist thing of being the very happy, together family with a lot of kids (four). I wish people whom we told this to would have gone beyond the dismissive statement "wait till you have the first one (ha ha!)" Tentative practical solution up for offer to potential parents: unpack the deeper emotional price one pays in having kids, why is it that the entire tenor of conversation with an impending father took on the quality of a horror story. Is it the reality of us having kids (given where we're at) that we have found having a kid a considerable emotional and personal strain, often a struggle of survival, a lonely path of discovery of my limitations in relation to bringing up Ben. Can we talk of having kids as a curtailment of our individual freedom? Yes.

On my current feelings about Ben: The greatest pay-off for me in terms of maintaining my relationship with Ben is the totally uncomplicated character of that relationship. That is its greatest value and stands in sharp contrast to the complexity and complications of my relationships with adults (both sexes). What does this uncomplicated character consist of: foremost is the ability and feeling of being able to take things at their face value. I feel totally relaxed with Ben: we enjoy each others' company, I don't need to feel the necessity of projecting expectations about him in relation to me, I find it easy to take things as they come when in his company.

On the fractured and timetabled nature of the relationship with Ben: For a time I felt that splitting with Liz was splitting with Ben: no longer the possibility for an organic development of our relationship, no more living with the ups and downs of his moods. No more do I feel like that: regularity of contact allows for the continuity of the relationship when we're not together: if ever there was a solid, sensible ground rule that Liz made clear to me from the outset was the necessity for regular contact with Ben at the times and moments when we agreed that I would see him. I feel it is critically important to stick to the arrangements made: we have found there is no scope for fucking about here.

On the importance of honesty with kids: As far as my relationship with Ben, and the dissolution of my scene with Liz, I have found it important to explain to him why Liz and I don't live together any more. Keep it simple and straightforward while not underestimating the kids capability to comprehend why a relationship breaks up.

On anger, frustration, and emotional violence with kids: Be Honest! Kids are sometimes a fucking nuisance: they get in the way of permitting you the freedom to relate to adults, to be on your own, to read a book, to just be yourself. During his or her waking hours the parent responsible for the kid's care, welfare, entertainment, material needs assumes a task which negates individuality in oneself. The hours drift by, your space is circumscribed by your child, not one moment appears to be your own there is a sudden feeling of exhaustion once your kid is settled down for the night. It is that kind of experience that leads to frustration, anger, resentment, guilt, and a whole set of other emotions. My guess is you're no ordinary person if you don't experience these.



"So the only get-even you can have with a chick because they leave you is the kids. That's the only get-even, that's the sweet revenge. Get the kids. But you can't be that obvious with it. You know, get the kids because I want to get even with you, you shithead you. So the construction is:
I went over there and the kid's wet. The kid's not going to live like that Everytime I go over there the kid's wet. She don't take care of thekid, the kid's wet and that's it. I'm taking that kid away from her because the kid's wet. And she's having guys over there. Did you see any guys?
No, but when the kid's wet... and that's it. I'll take the kid. I got custody of my kid now. I love my kid. Not going to be with that tramp any more blah, blah...blah.
Where are the kids now?
With my parents.
Oh, very good. Hmm."

Lenny Bruce

US AND OUR OFFSPRING

The aim of this piece is to make some general points about men and kids rather than talk about our own individual private experience. We want to criticise an implicit assumption that by being men, we somehow all have the same experience in common. We want to ask what men, in what situations?

Three things have been important in sharing our experience. Whatever our class origins we have ended up in middle-class work free of long regular hours. This has had great impact on our relationships with our children. We are in relationships with politically conscious women. Thirdly we are men who genuinely want responsibility for child care. These things have put us outside the traditional images of fatherhood, enabling us to spend large amounts of time with our kids when they were very young (the traditional man's relationship with his son only really begins when he is old enough to play football with . . . or hit). The women who we live with have insisted we ask of ourselves questions that men in more 'conventional' set-ups don't have to deal with. We exist in a new sort of household. We are separated both from most other people who have kids and bring them up conventionally *and* men and women who share our sexual and political beliefs but don't take any responsibility for children.

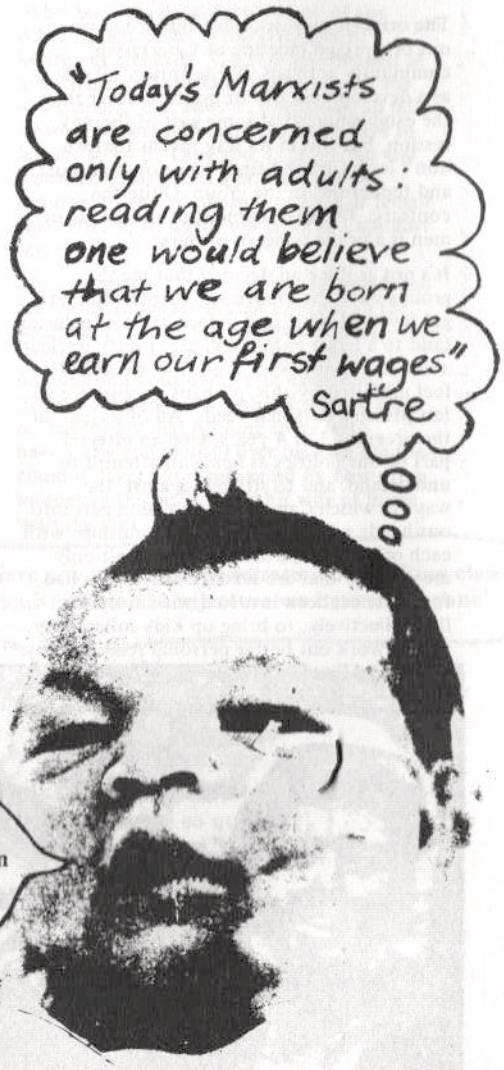
Prior to having kids there existed a kind of blissful ignorance, followed by a sudden sharp shock and then a speedy acquisition of a body of knowledge which in retrospect appears to be utterly obvious. The reason for this is an inability or unwillingness among men to talk openly about the actual problems of bringing up kids. There is no process by which men informally hand on their experience. At work or in the pub, you might talk with quiet pride about your kid walking or doing well at school but not about the problem of dropping the 4 o'clock feed. It's not done to admit, to other men, the effect children are having on our lives. Children are a secret, discussed in minute detail with our partners but never mentioned to our mates. There are no networks where our experience as fathers is shared or discussed so we are left feeling lonely and isolated. It's really depressing when a man friend rings up for a pint and you say 'I'll be looking after the kids for the next three days' and he says 'Oh well what about tomorrow night then' as if you hadn't really spoken and the child-care was an optional extra which would evaporate at the mention of the boozer.

If the process of sharing the experience of fatherhood is to get underway what is needed above all is much more honesty on the part of those with children about the real problems of bringing them up. The most important difference between being single and being a parent is being responsible for someone else's life. It never goes away, you can't have holidays from it because in the last instance if you don't do it, no-one else will. This is not a kind of moralising but an accurate description of something that becomes the dominant feature of life. In this we are experiencing as men, the dilemma and the exhaustion of constant responsibility that women have known for generations.

Because we are able to take an equal share of the considerable domestic chores, the emotional and sexual aspect of our relationship with the woman tends to end up in second place to the demands of caring for the child. Plus a further complication in that the woman, sometimes with good reason in view of the traditional behaviour of guys, finds it difficult to surrender the exclusivity of the traditional mother/child relationship. The father then seems to be getting the worst of both worlds; he's seen as a bit of a nutter by most men for doing so much in the home, he never really gets the rewards of 'motherhood'. Motherhood is a very loaded word because the chance of developing a close emotional and physical bond with children is a very dubious reward for all the shit-work mothers have to do . . . but it does exist. Finally, our adult love-relationship is no longer the main thing. You feel resentful about the effect the child has on your identity and sexual relationship.

And even if you can sort out the mix up of feelings between man, woman and child and work them through at home, the outside world arranges things so that its continual uphill work to work out ways where parents can share work/earning and the bringing up of children equally. The world of work assumes the conventional family and man's role in it, in ways you don't really notice until you try to alter things. And this is getting worse, not better. Part-time work is much harder to get, and doesn't count towards 'career' or NInsurance. Nurseries are harder and harder to get places in, are often of fairly low quality and are very sharply class defined. There are little children's palaces if you can pay but most nurseries for ordinary people feed and keep warm the kids but not a lot more, there just aren't enough people to look after the kids emotionally and they are often in a state by the time you collect them. When you get short of money, which seems to be more often every year of glorious inflation that passes, it's almost inevitably the bloke that goes back to full time work, simply because of his greater earning power. The old situation, the old resentments surface again, even more bitterly this time round because of the glimpse of something else.

We feel that men's groups in the area of kids have two practical things going for them. Firstly it can be a way of short-circuiting the silence and secrecy concerning male parenthood. Secondly it can give men a chance to discuss the frustrations and strains which the arrival of a child can have on his sexual life. But in the last instance the divide between the haves and have nots will never disappear until those without children are prepared to give up a portion of their freedom. And parents, of both sexes, will not be freed until people of both sexes, with and without children, see it as a central part of the trade union and political struggle to fight for forms of collective and democratic child care. Baby sitting rotas for political groups, creches at meetings, improved, not cut, child welfare services, many more, much better equipped nurseries are not minor or even female issues. They are necessary to our survival as men too.


"Today's Marxists are concerned only with adults: reading them one would believe that we are born at the age when we earn our first wages"
Sartre

'Deep and real co-operation in parenthood between men and liberated women would regenerate society. With his customary superiority man has classed women with children. Close on the heels of women's emancipation follows the emancipation of the child'
Dora Russell 1934

and from the archives:

THE ISLINGTON MENS GROUP

(a document circa 1974 recently discovered in a disused squat in N.1)

The first group of men met at the end of 1972. A couple of us were going through a period of great depression to do with our relationships with women, and felt the need to talk to other men on a personal level. Five of us met, two of whom were gay. This group only met a few times.

The next group started in Spring '73 and, apart from a break in the summer of about 2 months has been going ever since. We meet every Wednesday; at first about 15 attended regularly, but since the summer there has been a regular attendance of 8. Altogether some 20 men have been involved at one time or another.

The original suggestion for this group came out of a mixed meeting of Libertarian/ community activists. We definitely all saw it as a development of our politics rather than the establishment of some sort of therapy session, but this in no way means that we don't look for (and find) emotional support and tenderness in the group. Quite the contrary. The development of this between men is a prime concern of ours.

It's not as if we all decided that men's groups were the 'politically correct' thing to get involved with, and indeed most of us were (and to a lesser extent still are) pretty unclear about the 'politics' of it all. But we didn't feel inhibited by this, perhaps because we all felt pressing personal needs. All of us had, in the previous 3 or 4 years, seen an integral part of our politics as being an attempt to understand, and to struggle against, the ways in which Capitalist oppression gets into our heads and fucks up our relationships with each other (by relationships we don't only mean those that are sexual). Most of us had, for instance, been involved with attempts to live collectively, to bring up kids collectively, and to work out better personal relationships.

These early attempts came before the perceptions of the womens movement had penetrated our everyday lives. We had no real understanding of the ways in which we'd been formed as men. Our attempts to break thru family structures. to question monogamy and all that goes with it, were distorted by our male fantasies and outlook.

We'd all been content to relate to each other as men in pretty straight ways. That is to say we didn't really seek emotional support/ tenderness from each other, being content to get this from the women with whom we were having sexual scenes. Our relationships were, in many ways, based on our respect for/fear of each others' strengths rather than the ability to accept our weaknesses fully and work them thru together. This meant that we were trapped in the old old trip of keeping up images, of hiding much of ourselves for fear of rejection. The competitiveness which expresses itself not only in sexual rivalry, but also in our work, discussions, and indeed in every aspect of our lives, went unchallenged.

For 2 or 3 years some of us had had ideological beliefs about relating differently to other men; but it now became a necessity. With the growth of the womens movement we got less support from the women we were involved with and the true poverty of our masculine fantasies of independence and of not needing people were exposed with frightening clarity. We became very envious of the togetherness of the women.

Then we began to meet. At first it was all very shy and tentative. It was very odd to sit in a room with other men and have no reason other than your emotions for being there. We were all embarrassed when talking to other men about our involvment in men's groups. The thing that kept us going was the urgency of our need to break the masculine barriers between us, if we were going to stay sane. We still feel that need very strongly, but the little progress that we have made gives us some confidence in the political validity of what we're doing.

In early November there was a conference of men's groups and some 'unattached' men in Birmingham. About 100 men were there and probably a dozen or so groups were represented. Half a dozen of us went from Islington and were really knocked out by the experience, as were most of the people we talked to. The atmosphere there was fantastically warm and friendly, which, unfortunately, is in striking contrast to most other conferences (tho' not, probably, to women's conferences). For instance: the Saturday session consisted of half a dozen groups of 20 or so people. When someone new came over to a group he wasn't just ignored and left to catch up with the discussion but was made to feel really welcome, was told what was being talked about and was drawn in. An incredible effort was made to show sensitivity to each other and not to get into any of the pitfalls of male (and other) gatherings. Like, there were very few interruptions; no-one criticised in a way that would make you feel put down; no-one felt impelled to raise their voice (because no-one else was raising theirs); you didn't have to hustle to have your say; you didn't get the situation of one person following another in rapid succession (usually the same people) so you had plenty of time to get your thoughts together and articulate them. This was also made easier by the friendly and unintimidating atmosphere. There seemed to be no reason why you shouldn't be as unsure and as tentative as you felt, so there was no need to remain silent because you couldn't get your thoughts and arguments together with the forcefulness and articulateness that is usually required. Not only were people eager to say things, but were also eager to listen to and to understand other people's experiences.

We feel that it is important to emphasise these aspects of the conference, because they highlight so much of what is wrong with the ways in which we usually relate to each other in discussions, meetings, or conferences.

We're not claiming that it's always like this between us, even in men's group sessions. Indeed one of the things that disturbs us is the way in which we tend to get back into the same old trips once we've stopped talking

about 'personal matters'. The meetings are quite rambly and two or three times we've got onto talking about things like the economic situation, Chile, automation, or similar topics. Once such more traditionally male discussions start we become much more self assertive. We interrupt each other, talk each other down, raise our voices, get irritated with each other, dominate.

Another point about such discussions is that we often catch ourselves slipping into them, as an excuse for not talking about more personal things. It's so easy for men to hide their personal life and emotions behind a facade of concern for the 'more important' matters of the world. It reflects one of our basic oppressions.

For us, men's liberation is about seeing how we have been conditioned by the various institutions of Capitalist society into having a particular personality, of relating to other people in particular ways, into playing certain roles, all of which fuck us up in specifically male ways. It's about men coming together and getting to know each other in ways different from those in which men usually 'know' each other, about giving and receiving emotional support from each other, about opening yourself up to other guys.

None of us wish to commit the error of seeing our liberation as anything other than the task of a mass revolutionary movement. But to see your personal problems as political it seems necessary as a first step to *talk* about them, to share the unarticulated subjective experience of being oppressed and fucked over with other men. To try to see where our experiences tally and to relate them to the conditioning that we have all undergone, and still undergo 24 hours a day.

This openness in itself can be a mind blowing experience. Being a man can be quite lonely: often there's this whirlpool of feelings, fears, uptights, uncertainties, going on inside of you. And so often you feel embarrassed to come out with it 'cos it seems so stupid, or trivial, or weak. You get to feel that it's just *you*, that your problems are no-one else's, and that you are in some way 'inadequate' (which is – of course – just what THEY want you to think). Just coming out with it can be such a relief as you discover that your brothers are going, or have been, thru similar things. That they not only understand and sympathise with your private hell, but they actually *know* how you feel 'cos they've been thru the same shit themselves.

Being a man in this society means a continual game with yourself and with other people. You have to behave in 'manly' ways. Be hard, be strong, be forceful, be decisive, keep cool and in control, never show your weaknesses, fears, and anxieties, never let your emotions 'get the better of you', never get upset.

Acting like a man is having to keep us a front all the time, continually denying part of yourself – especially any dependencies, translating any pain into aggression (being 'pissed off' or 'uptight' rather than 'upset'. Getting angry rather than crying). Be uptight, be aggressive, be nasty, but never, never ever be weak, or never show your weaknesses. Disguise them, deny them, fight them, contort them. But never express them.

And so much do the male ways of relating to each other reinforce all this. We can all remember the social sanctions against any cracks in the armour: "Big boys don't cry", "If you can keep your head when all around are losing theirs you're a man my son, a man". How much of our relationships to other boys and other men consisted of digging for their weaknesses and then using them against them ("only for a bit of fun").

We measure our 'autonomy' and 'independence' by our distance from others, our 'strength' by our power over others. Being *more* of a man than other men (with all the put downs, aggression, and ego games that it entails) is very much part of being a man.

So it's quite easy to see how our relationships to each other come to be built on an admiration or fear of each other's strengths. We're conditioned to see men as austere, as people whose respect/love we have to earn. Earn by behaving in certain ways, by being a man, by being strong. This was how we learnt to relate to the first man we ever knew – our father. A distant figure, imprisoned in his own masculinity, and the ultimate source of authority over us (if mum said "wait till your dad gets home" we knew we were in real trouble).

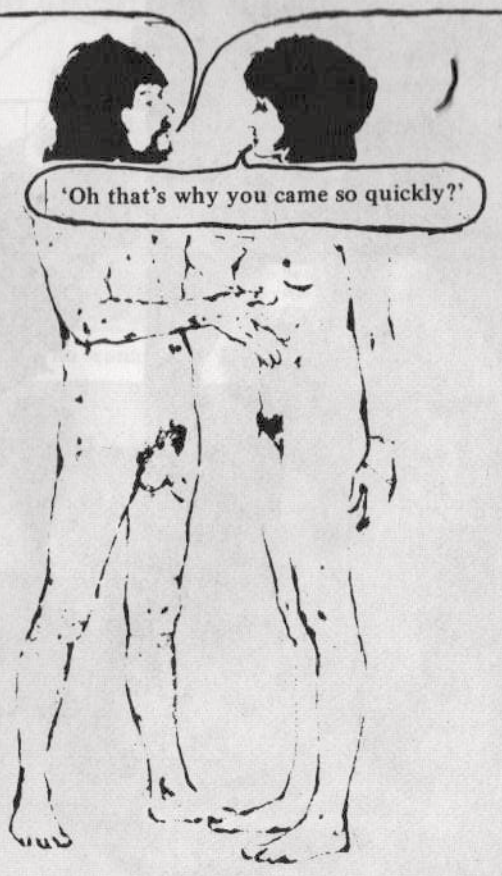
Getting away from these aggressive, competitive, reserved ways of relating is very much part of what we're about. It's a process of softening up, of feminising ourselves. But this needs quite a few qualifications. We certainly don't want to confuse a struggle against our masculinity with an uncritical attempt to assume 'feminine' characteristics – as they are at present defined in this society. For example; it's all very well to talk about men's liberation as being about putting men in touch with their emotions (like women are supposed to be) but these emotions are pretty fucked up too. Indeed, being too easily overwhelmed by their emotions is, perhaps, an integral part of woman's oppression.

Neither do we want to get into blanket put downs of everything 'masculine'. In our struggle against a repressive society there is a sense in which we need our 'male' virtues as much as we need to develop more 'feminine' ones. Capitalism needs weak, indecisive, dependent people who can be easily manipulated to play our their roles as workers, housewives, or consumers.

So, like we've said, we're not attempting to overthrow everything 'male', even if that were possible. There are many so called 'male' characteristics that we wish to keep or develop. There are many situations in which, if we are to fight successfully against the society that has so mutilated us, we must be more on top of things, more together, more tough, more clear thinking, more aggressive, more worked out, more forceful. But if that struggle is to be really successful, if we are to overthrow capitalistic human relationships as well as the capitalist relations of production we have to develop the consciousness *in us all* of the contradictory nature of our masculinity: the aspects that are essential attributes of any whole person, and the false, role conditioned aspects that are so integral to our oppression. And yet its institutions con us men into seeing ourselves as strong, decisive, autonomous, independent, courageous, and all the rest of it. But what do these things really mean? And from where do we learn what it means to be 'strong' or 'decisive' or any of the other things. There is but one source: bourgeois ideology. The various channels of indoctrination: the family, the school, the newspapers, tele, adverts, pop music all tell us what we should be, and how we have to behave to be it. They give us perverted and distorted ideas about qualities that are essential to any whole person male or female the better to fit us for our roles in Capitalist society.

Thus, 'strength', 'courage', or 'independence' are the qualities attributed to the scab for resisting 'pressure' from his workmates. 'Decisiveness' is all to do with making decisions on your own, with exercising power over people. A man's 'independence' or 'autonomy' has nothing to do with having any real control over his own life (how could it have) but is measured by how often he goes to the pub leaving his wife at home with the kids.

'The abject failure of British Marxism to achieve any long term penetration of working class consciousness is the consequence of the difficult historical conjecture we have undergone'



And all these characteristics are put over as being attributes of individuals. You, individually, are born with them 'cos you're a man. Nowhere in the ideology that forms us do we find a recognition of the fact that (eg) strength or courage come from other people, that it is only our brothers and sisters, our comrades, the movement who can give us any real strength or courage. (In so far as such a recognition is made it is, of course, distorted – "The woman behind the man").

The competitiveness of 'male' ideology forces us further into our individual prisons. The distorted ideas of 'manliness' divide us. Guess the mens group experience is a period of self-questioning for us all. Questioning every aspect of ourselves and our aspirations and trying-together-to distinguish the false, role conditioned aspects from the real ones. But this seems essential if we are to really be in control of who we are and what we want. It's a process of trying to suss out the extent to which Capitalism has infiltrated our every emotion, thought and need. An' how, indeed, it has infiltrated and distorted our revolutionary ideas.

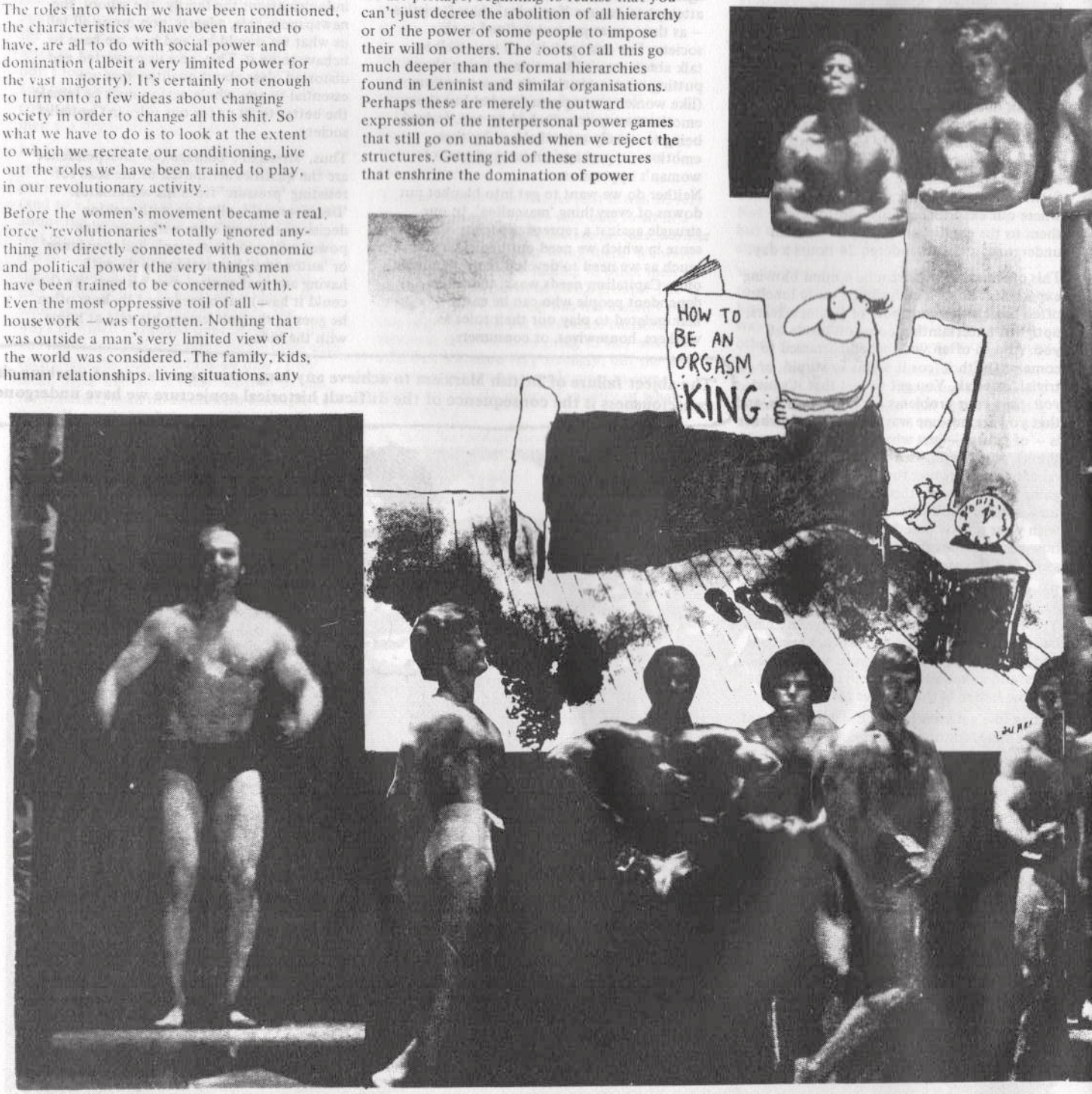
The roles into which we have been conditioned, the characteristics we have been trained to have, are all to do with social power and domination (albeit a very limited power for the vast majority). It's certainly not enough to turn onto a few ideas about changing society in order to change all this shit. So what we have to do is to look at the extent to which we recreate our conditioning, live out the roles we have been trained to play, in our revolutionary activity.

Before the women's movement became a real force "revolutionaries" totally ignored anything not directly connected with economic and political power (the very things men have been trained to be concerned with). Even the most oppressive toil of all – housework – was forgotten. Nothing that was outside a man's very limited view of the world was considered. The family, kids, human relationships, living situations, any mention of these was regarded as 'deviationist', 'subjectivist', 'petit bourgeois' or whatever and as problems that could be sorted out *after* the real business of the revolution had been got together. The understanding of capitalist oppression and ideology was partial and was, therefore, itself ideological. It was distorted by bourgeois ideology in its sexist guise. And so, therefore, was our revolutionary activity. (Is it a coincidence that it was Alexandra Kollontai – a woman – who raised the question of sexuality in the Russian revolution.)

We cannot afford to have our eyes blinkered by our male conditioning any longer. We must continually increase the scope of our critique of capitalism and of our fight back, questioning all the time the (male) hierarchies of importance in which we still place our activities. Bourgeois ideology has – via our male conditioning – not only distorted our ideas about what the revolution is, but it also affects our ideas about how we get it together (organisation), and about our relationships to each other as revolutionaries.

We are perhaps, beginning to realise that you can't just decree the abolition of all hierarchy or of the power of some people to impose their will on others. The roots of all this go much deeper than the formal hierarchies found in Leninist and similar organisations. Perhaps these are merely the outward expression of the interpersonal power games that still go on unabashed when we reject the structures. Getting rid of these structures that enshrine the domination of power groups is but a first step to getting rid of domination itself and such a project must still figure very much in our organisational principles.

It's quite difficult to make any assessment of the 'progress' we've made thru our involvment in the men's group. It's not as if we have particularly clear goals towards which we're working and it's probably fair to say that we continue to meet 'cos we all feel a strong personal need to come together in this way. Our confusions about who we are, and in what ways we want to change ourselves demand that we work this out with our brothers and sisters, that is to say that we make ourselves accountable to each other. Such accountability is something that is crucial to us, but it is very difficult to develop. We hope we are beginning to establish that mutual trust and affection that is an absolute necessity if we are going to confront and criticise each other without the usual aggressiveness/defensiveness. Some of the best 'highs' we have experienced have been when we've approached such candour.



Nixon Is Still Most Admired

By George Gallup

★ ★ ★

MOST ADMIRED MAN 1970	MOST ADMIRED 1969
1. Richard Nixon	1. Richard Nixo
2. Billy Graham	2. Billy Graham
3. Edward Kennedy	3. Spiro Agnew
4. Spiro Agnew	4. Lyndon Johns
5. Pope Paul VI	5. Edward Kenne
6. Edmund Muskie	6. Humbert Humph
7. LyndonJohnson	7. Harry Truman
8. Ronald Reagan	8. George Wallace
9. Hubert Humphrey	9. Pope Paul VI
10. Harry Truman	10. EdmundMuskie

'My assailants did not apparently require my death or even my disfigurement. This was why I concluded that a large part of their motive for attacking me was to realise their sexual curiosity in a manner consistent with their heavily guarded idea of manliness' Quintin Crisp

GETTIN' TO KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU...

HOW TO ... YOUR BABY

COMES A FIREFIGHT— YOUR M16A1 RIFLE'S YOUR DEAREST NEXT O'SKIN-BAR NONE!

SWEET 16

BE A MAN AMONG MEN

Rhodesian recruiting ad

EVERY DAY this week, an American wanting to fight as a mercenary in Rhodesia will phone Lt Col Bob Re... tiny ...

"If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrels' heart beat, and we would all die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity"

George Eliot 'Middlemarch'

CAREFUL WITH THAT LUBRICANT

If any of this lubricant film spatters inside the receiver parts, wash it off with dryclcaning solvent. The inside toler- ances for the receiver parts are too tight to allow any film to build up in there. This will definitely interfere with the ...peration.

SHE DIDN'T BELIEVE ANY MAN COULD LAST THAT LONG!

'Be cruel with your past and all those who would keep you there' Anon

W.B.B.G. 1974

An expert tells you how to get back in shape!

Our files show that thousands of men want to get back in shape, but don't know how to go about it. We decided to ask an expert, Mike Washout, leading fitness authority. Here are his answers.

Q. How can I get back in shape?

A. There's only one answer to that: join a men's group.

Q. Won't sports do the trick?

A. No. They'll make you tired and you might hurt yourself.

Q. How about calisthenics?

A. He was disproved years ago. Marxism is better.

Q. Isn't there an easier way?

A. There is no easy way. You cannot avoid a sexist society or the challenge of the women's movement.

Q. What's it called?

A. Men's Group training. It's based on Marxist techniques which have been proven to increase strength three times faster than conventional methods.

Q. What kind of results can I expect?

A. There's a lot of pain, self-discovery and anguish. Our files show you usually experience an increase in marital and mental breakdown, dependence on alcohol and tears. But a lot less flab round the feelings. It feels nice.

Q. But it's hard work, isn't it?

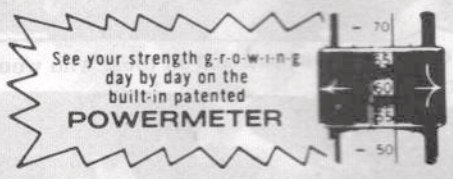
A. Yes.

Q. Where can I find out more?

A. See the back page.

Q. What can I expect from continued training?

A. The sky's the limit. There are specialised exercises for building-up or trimming down any part of your body you want to – bulging biceps, powerful wrists and forearms – a deep, manly chest tapering down to a flat, trim waist – muscular thighs and calves. You can expect strength increases of up to 4% a week; that's 50% in just three months and I have seen many men go on to double and even treble their strength. You can also get into radical eating, Marxist astrology, embroidery or even a renewed and deeper understanding of revolutionary politics. Start a men's group and find out.



BE A *NEW* MAN

Let Bullworker help you discover what it's like to be a *real* man ... to walk proudly on the street and the beach ... to be *noticed* when you walk into a restaurant or bar. And with this new dynamism MUST come new confidence and new zest for work and play. Now go and take an honest look at yourself in the mirror. TODAY could be the day you could take the first vital step to being a new man. What have you got to lose? Except what you saw in that mirror!

MENS GROUPS – MAY 1977

BRIXTON	735-6123 Russell
CAMDEN 1	15 Rosslyn Hill, NW3 435-7664 Neil
CAMDEN 2	38 Chalcot Rd., NW1 722-9090 Ulrich
CAMDEN 3	16 & 19 Georgiana St., NW1. Phil & John & Dave 458-1481 Michael
DALSTON	39 Parkholme Rd., E8 249-3072 Pete 12 Montague Rd., E8 254-9497 Dave
EAST LONDON /BRIXTON	12 Montague Rd., E8 254-9497 Paul
EAST LONDON MENS CENTRE	19 Redmans Rd., E1 790-2454
ELEPHANT & CASTLE	52 Josephine Ave., SW2 674-5747
ISLINGTON	316 Upper St., N1 272-7523 Geoff Norman
LUTON	7 May St., Luton 0582 21321
MEN & HEALTH GROUP	33 Trossachs Rd., SE22 693-4066 Trevor
MILE END	33 Tredegar Square, Bow, E3 980-6053 Tom
NW LONDON	54 Lymington Rd., 980-6233 Mark
WANDSWORTH 1	12 Gatesbury Rd., SW18 870-3786 Russell
WANDSWORTH 2	15 Sibella Rd., SW4 228-1140 Paul 789-6799 Dave

There are also groups in BIRMINGHAM, BOLTON, BRIGHTON, MANCHESTER
*For addresses and meetings contact Mens Centre.

FREE BOOKLET

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This issue was talked about, written and produced by Nigel, Dave, Jock, Pete, David, Bill, Stuart, Alasdair of the Dalston Mens Group and Mick and Chris of the West Riding Hets.

Typeset by Bread 'n Roses, 30 Camden Road, NW1.
Graphics by Soft Edge/Red Wedge Collective.
Printed by Islington Community Press, 2a St.Pauls Rd., N1.

Published by Mens Free Press, 19 Redmans Rd., E1. 790-2454.

Send cash or P.O. in advance with orders to Mens Centre. 25p each P&P. 20 for £5.